

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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----- 130448

R 121245Z JUN 74

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1691  
INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
AMCONSUL CURACAO  
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 280

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, NS

SUBJECT: NEW VHP POLICY ON INDEPENDENCE

1. SUMMARY. VHP CHAIRMAN LACHMON HAS LAUNCHED A NEW MORE FLEXIBLE POLICY ON INDEPENDENCE WHICH WILL ENABLE THE VHP TO INFLUENCE KEY DECISIONS, POSSIBLY TO DELAY INDEPENDENCE, AND PLACES THE VHP IN A BETTER POSITION TO CAPITALIZE ON ANY EVENTUAL SPLIT IN THE NPK-COALITION. END SUMMARY.

2. VHP LEADER LACHMON HAS ANNOUNCED AN IMPORTANT CHANGE IN HIS PARTY'S POLICY REGARDING THE INDEPENDENCE OF SURINAM. ON THE OCCASION OF WIDELY PUBLICIZED VHP AND STATE CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING HIS UNBROKEN 25-YEAR SERVICE AS A PARLIAMENTARIAN, LACHMON STATED THAT HENCEFORTH THE VHP WOULD NO LONGER OPPOSE THE GOAL OF INDEPENDENCE BY END 1975 WHICH THE NPK-COALITION HAS SET, ALTHOUGH IT REMAINED HIS "PERSONAL OPINION" THAT THE 1975 DATE WAS "TOO HASTY." LACHMON SAID THAT THE VHP WILL NOW WORK TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNING COALITION ON THE QUESTION OF GUARANTEES AND THE CONDITIONS OF INDEPENDENCE TO BE OBTAINED FROM THE NETHERLANDS. SOME MATTERS ON WHICH "IRREVOCABLE" GUARANTEES WERE TO BE SOUGHT WOULD BE DEFENSE, NATIONALITY, ENTRY OF SURINAMERS INTO HOLLAND, DEVELOPMENT  
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AID, AND ASSOCIATION WITH THE EEC. ON OTHER OCCASIONS LACHMON

HAS ALSO STRESSED GON GUARANTEES FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND FOR MINORITY RIGHTS IN SURINAM AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

3. LACHMON CLAIMD, AS HE OFTEN HAS IN THE PAST, THAT THE NETHERLANDS IS EVEN MORE DESIROUS OF INDEPENDENCE FOR SURINAM THAN SURINAM ITSELF, AND THAT THERE IS THEREFORE NO NEED FOR SURINAM TO FIGHT FOR ITS INDEPENDENCE. THE NEED IS, HE CONTINUED, TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY GUARANTEES AND CONDITIONS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. HE PROMISED THE LOYAL SUPPORT OF THE PSSPOSITION TO THIS END, POINTING OUT THAT, ONCE INDEPENDENCE IS ACHIEVED, THERE IS NO WAY BACK.

4. THE POLICY CHANGE WAS PRIMARILY A RESULT OF TWO CONSIDERATIONS, SAID LACHMON. HE HAD OBSERVED THAT POLITICAL DIFFERENCES ON INDEPENDENCE HAD CAUSED GREAT RACIAL "OLARIZATION," JEOPARDIZING THE POLICY OF BROTHERHOOD AND "SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION" WHICH THE VHP HAD LONG FOSTERED. THE VHP ALSO WANTED TO ENSURE THAT WHEN INDEPENDENCE COMES, THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS WOULD BE PRESENT.

5. INITIAL PUBLIC REACTIONS FROM NPK AS WELL AS PRO LACHMON CIRCLES HAS BEEN VERY FAVORABLE. PRIVATELY, MOST REACTIONS HAVE BEEN ALMOST OF RELIEF THAT THE VHP HAD TAKEN A LONG OVERDUE STEP TO END ITS SO FAR STERILE OPPOSITION IN WHICH IT COULD NEITHER STOP OR DELAY INDEPENDENCE, NOR INFLUENCE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT MIGHT BE OBTAINED.

6. COMMENT: LACHMON'S MOVE WAS PROBABLY IN PART DUE TO A REALIZATION THAT HE WAS IN A NO-WIN POSITION. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE CONSUL GENERAL, LACHMON WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED BY THE DEGREE OF DETERMINATION IN GON CIRCLES, IN WHICH HE HAD BEEN IN CONTACT DURING A RECENT TRIP TO THE NETHERLANDS, THAT SURINAM BECOME INDEPENDENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ALTHOUGH HE HAD STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE COULD DENY THE GOVERNMENT THE 2/3 MAJORITY HE CLAIMED IT NEEDED, AND PRIVATELY THAT HE COULD ENGINEER A SPLIT IN THE GOVERNING COALITION, HE HAS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY ABANDONED THESE COURSES OF ACTION, WHICH MOST INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS INCLUDING THIS CONSULATE BELIEVED TO BE UNREALISTIC.

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7. ANOTHER FACTOR WAS THE APPARENT SUCCESS OF PRIME MINISTER ARRON'S RECENT VISIT TO THE HAGUE AND THE NEW IMPETUS WHICH IT IMPARTED TO THE MOVE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE. (PARAMARIBO 252)

8. LACHMON'S CONCERN OVER RACIAL POLARIZATION IS AT LEAST IN PART SINCERE, ALTHOUGH HE AND HIS PARTY BY PLAYING ON THE FEARS OF HIS HINDUSTANI CONSTITUENCY ARE PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. UNTIL A YEAR AGO, SURINAM MIGRATION TO HOLLAND WAS

HEAVILY CREOLE, ABOUT 70-30. SINCE THEN THE BALANCE HAS SHARPLY SHIFTED, TO THE POINT WHERE KLM UNOFFICIALLY ESTIMATES TRAFFIC TO BE 70-30 HINDUSTANI. LACHMON HAS IN THE PAST REFERRED TO CREOLE MIGRATION WITH SATISFACTION, DESCRIBING IT AS A LOSS BY CREOLE POLITICAL PARTIES OF "THEIR SOLDIERS," IN THE COMPETITION BETWEEN HINDUSTANI AND CREOLE. THE ANALYSIS NOW CANTS THE OTHER WAY.

9. LACHMON'S NEW COURSE OPENS A PROMISING NEW FIELD FOR THE VHP FOR OPPOSITION TO INDEPENDENCE. BY CONCENTRATING ON THE ISSUES LACHMON MAY BE ABLE TO DEVELOP DIFFERENCES WHERE NETHERLANDS AND SURINAM INTERESTS CONFLICT. ON SOME SUCH ISSUES, SUCH AS GUARANTEED ACCESS TO THE NETHERLANDS, HE HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF ATTRACTING SUPPORT FROM SOME ELEMENTS OF THE NPK. BY DOING THIS, AND BY GENERALLY LESSENING THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE OPPOSITION AND THE NPK, THE VHP WILL BE IN BETTER POSITION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES AND ANY EVENTUAL SPLIT IN ITS NPK-COALITION, WHICH PROBABLY CONTINUES TO BE LACHMON'S MAIN LONG TERM OBJECTIVE IN ORDER TO RETURN TO POWER. AT THE VERY LEAST, THE VHP IS NOW IN A BETTER POSITION TO INFLUENCE THE TERMS OF INDEPENDENCE. JOHNSTON

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